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ABSTRACT

The nutrition instruction guide is designed for volunteer leaders in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), which focuses on youth nutrition education and understanding teenagers. Teaching techniques incorporate the importance of socialization, "discovering" answers, positive reinforcement, and teenager involvement in presenting nutrition education. The topics of weight control, teenage pregnancy, appearance, nutrition and drugs, fad diets, and physical fitness form the subject matter basis for group discussions. Ten group activity suggestions are described along with methods and hints for volunteer leaders to follow. (EA)

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a guide for Volunteers

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Teaching Teens "Stuff" That Counts

Teaching Teens...

about the importance of nutrition can be an exciting, worthwhile experience. There are as many effective approaches for volunteer leaders to use as there are volunteers. These approaches are discovered through one's imagination and in the many resources available for youth nutrition education.

This Booklet Has Been Designed...

to focus upon youth from thirteen to approximately seventeen years of age. It deals with understanding teenagers and how this understanding relates to the teaching-learning opportunities you provide as a volunteer leader in EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program). This is not a "nutrition information" resource. It goes beyond the subject matter--it deals with the individual.

TOPICS...

in youth nutrition identified by the Task Force on EFNEP Material for Teens:

- Weight Control
- Fad Diets
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Appearance
- Physical Fitness
- Nutrition and Drugs

These six topics are identified to develop a subject matter basis for a discussion of teenagers. This material can be used to support EFNEP resource sheets for the adult volunteer and the EFNEP resource sheets for teens.

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Teaching Teens "Stuff" That Counts

The first section of this booklet deals with four major topics related to youth development and nutrition education. The topics are designed to raise questions for discussion. Each leader will find ideas which will work for him or her. Leaders are not expected to accept every idea presented. Make your own value judgement. Interacting with other EFNEP volunteers in a group setting will broaden your own knowledge as a youth leader. These are the topics:

1) Importance of Socialization to the Teenager
2) Difference Between "Can" and "Should" in Teaching
3) Value of Positive Reinforcement
4) Involvement of Teenagers in Planning, Doing and Evaluating

The second section of the booklet suggests ten exciting strategies for leaders to use with their EFNEP groups. These activities are planned for the age group with which you will be working. Each is designed to include and involve individual teenagers in a very unique and meaningful way.

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Most of these strategies have been adapted from Values Clarification--A Handbook of Practical Strategies For Teachers and Students by Simon, Howe and Kirschenbaum.

*The subject matter examples given in these strategies can be adapted to the subject on which your group is working.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALIZATION

"Talking and fooling around! That's all they're interested in. I'm fed up!"

You are probably not alone in this feeling of frustration. And if you have not experienced it yet, just give yourself a little time! Teenagers just have lots of energy. They enjoy socializing with their peers and find their identity through these associations. At this time in their lives, the search for identify is an anxiety-ridden search. (Am I liked by my friends when I act a certain way or say one thing rather than another? What kind of person do I want others to see me as? How do I see myself? How can I express myself? Who am I?) Some psychologists refer to this period as "storm and stress."

Can we as leaders use this energy and this "socialization need" in a positive way--as an aid rather than an annoying drawback in teaching? Some suggested activities in the second section of this booklet might provide an outlet for this excess energy and an opportunity for individual expression within a peer group atmosphere. Try the Nametag activity and the Either-Or Forced Choice activity. Both provide opportunities to move around and also to express an answer to the question "who am I?" After you have tried these two activities, discuss reactions to them.

If you consider socialization to be important to teens, can you think of other ways to incorporate socialization into your nutrition teaching?

Some novelty ideas: How about a fishing trip for boys--with a lesson on fish cookery afterwards? You may even learn how to clean a fish from them! There can be mutual learning taking place when you work with teens. Try a picnic after a bike hike! Or a beach party with a cook out! These activities may take a little more time, but you may be a more effective leader as a result. Can you see some reasons why? What are the limitations or disadvantages of such activities for nutrition education meetings? Do you think such activities would work for you and your group?

MY OWN IDEAS...

TEENS WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEY "CAN" DO... NOT WHAT THEY "SHOULD" OR "SHOULD NOT" DO

Many adults believe their job in teaching is to tell teenagers what they need to know--to tell them what to do, when to do it, where, how, how often, and when to stop doing it. This is because adults each have their own attitudes, beliefs and values that they think are good. People like to pass on "good things." Yet, can attitudes, beliefs and values be forced upon others? Should we even try?

Maybe our job as leaders is to help teenagers discover their own answers rather than telling them what to do. For example: pizza, coke and teenagers seem to go together. We may see pizza and coke as "bad," unnutritious food. But how do teens look at such foods? Are they fad foods? What do they know about fad foods? What would they like to know? All these questions could be explored with your teenage group rather than just telling them that fad foods are "bad." Let your members decide for themselves.

Try the activity called What We Know--What We Want To Know. The Brainstorming activity is also a valuable one in uncovering different issues on a particular subject. Here is a good brainstorming question to try: How many arguments can you think of as to why people think fad foods are "good?" Why they are "bad?" (Make two lists). Would this information provide you with some good discussion material?

NOTES TO MYSELF...

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT CAN HELP SHAPE A PERSONALITY

IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH CRITICISM,
HE LEARNS TO CONDEMN.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH HOSTILITY,
HE LEARNS TO FIGHT.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH FEAR,
HE LEARNS TO BE APPREHENSIVE.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH PITY,
HE LEARNS TO FEEL SORRY FOR HIMSELF.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH RIDICULE,
HE LEARNS TO BE SHY.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH JEALOUSY,
HE LEARNS TO FEEL GUILTY

IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH ENCOURAGEMENT,
HE LEARNS TO BE CONFIDENT.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH PRAISE,
HE LEARNS TO BE APPRECIATIVE.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH APPROVAL,
HE LEARNS TO LIKE HIMSELF.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH RECOGNITION,
HE LEARNS TO HAVE A GOAL.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH HONESTY,
HE LEARNS WHAT TRUTH IS.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH FAIRNESS,
HE LEARNS JUSTICE.
IF A YOUTH LIVES WITH ACCEPTANCE,
HE LEARNS TO LOVE

(Adapted by Wilma Heinzelman from a selection by D. L. Law)

Can volunteer nutrition leaders really help shape the personality of a teenager? This beautiful poem seems to indicate so. Can you give examples of how any part of what it says can be related to your teaching?

To go one step further, positive reinforcement can be a real asset in the development of a personality. A project someone makes might be of excellent quality, but it is the individual who needs the positive reinforcement--and not the project. How can you give an individual positive reinforcement? The I Learned Statement strategy can reinforce new learnings that the members may not have realized were taking place. Isn't this a type of positive reinforcement?

Enthusiasm can act as a type of positive reinforcement. You need to participate enthusiastically in all of the strategies you use from this booklet in your nutrition teaching. If you are a leader who shows interest and enthusiasm in not only foods and nutrition, but also in each individual member, you will do a better job! And enthusiasm is catching.

WHAT DO YOU THINK...

INVOLVEMENT OF TEENS IN PLANNING, DOING, AND EVALUATING

What's it all about--that stuff called "learning?" Learning is not complete if facts are just stored in the human mind. Learning is useless if it does not apply to an individual's life. Even positive reinforcement loses its function if silly, unimportant topics and projects are continually pushed onto a group of teens. So, then, what is learning all about?

Learning can be exciting and useful if people are involved in what we might call the learning process. And all that means is involving teenagers in planning what they want to learn, active participation in the doing part, and finally, in evaluating what has taken place. Only through this kind of teen involvement can you be assured that you are helping those individuals to learn what is "real" and what is important in their own lives. To cover subjects that are irrelevant, way-out and meaningless will be futile. Teenage pregnancy and nutrition or the issue of drugs (diet pills and alcohol) might be easier to skip over, since they are controversial and very serious subjects. Yet, aren't they important issues in today's adolescent sub-culture? Don't they need to be faced, talked about and dealt with? Maybe in your particular group these subjects are not important, but can you make that judgement? The kinds of learning experiences in which members are involved are the kind that will be remembered longer and will be used much more than learning which is forced on a group of individuals.

If you look at the strategies listed in this booklet, you will find that all of them encourage member involvement. The Self-Contract is an excellent method to use for planning individual goals. In Letters to the Editor members must plan what they will write about, then do the actual writing and finally, they discuss the question ". . . if I had to do it again, I would . . ." This completes the evaluation step.

Each strategy helps members to look at themselves and their values in relation to nutrition. Each is designed to "involve" teens. Therefore, each can provide the type of learning which is real and important in the teen world.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER...

"STUFF" TO TRY IN SMALL GROUPS

Nametags

THE ACTIVITY: Provides a good conversation starter for the first meeting.

METHOD: Each person needs a notecard and pin.

The leader gives the following directions:

1. Write your first name, nickname, or anything you like to be called (in large letters) somewhere on your card.
2. Write your favorite food on your card. Your least favorite.
3. Finish this sentence. TO ME, EATING . . .
4. Which is your favorite of the basic four food groups?

When members have finished, pin on tags and walk around to look at other's cards.

After a few minutes, members should select a partner, introduce themselves and begin talking about why they finished sentence #3 as they did.

After a few more minutes, have members find another partner whom they do not know. Introductions should be made between partners and then each should answer the question: What are some foods you like within your favorite basic four food group?

HINTS: Leader should join in! Members will want to know something about you, too.

Brainstorming

THE ACTIVITY: Helps to uncover different issues on a particular subject.

Helps to stimulate thinking.

METHOD:

Rules: 1) No evaluation of any kind is allowed during brainstorming.
2) Everyone is encouraged to come up with as many wild ideas as possible.
3) Quantity is encouraged.
4) Everyone is encouraged to build upon or modify the ideas of others.

Here are some suggested brainstorming topics to use:

- How many ways can you think of to go on a diet?
- What can nutrition do that drugs cannot do?
- Name ways you can be physically fit?
- Why are your friends important to you?

Use the six topics identified by the Task Force on EFNEP (page 3) to develop other brainstorming topics.

Write all brainstorming ideas on a blackboard or large sheet of paper so everyone can see them. After brainstorming has been completed, the best and most interesting ideas can be pulled out and used in your nutrition sessions. Members may make this decision.

HINTS:

This might be a good technique with which to begin a planning meeting.

If you plan to talk about a specific subject, brainstorming can be an aid in stimulating thinking on that subject.

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What We Know - What We Want To Know

THE ACTIVITY: Provides for member involvement in planning a specific topic.

Provides opportunities for members to share knowledge and generate interest in a topic.

METHOD: At the beginning of your meetings, on teenage pregnancy for example, the leader says: "There are many things you probably already know about this topic and how it relates to nutrition, even though we may not have covered it at any of our meetings. Let's see what you do know about nutrition and teenage pregnancy. What kinds of foods are important in teenage pregnancy?

Use a large flip pad and magic marker and have someone record items of information. Make no judgement about any item. If a member contributes it, put it on the chart. (Later on, either the members will discover, or the leader can point out, any factual errors.)

When all the things the group knows about teenage pregnancy are up on the flip chart the leader says: "OK, now what don't you know about teenage pregnancy that you would like to know?" Use another paper to write these things. (Often the members come up with important personal values about the topic.) The leader can and should contribute items to both lists.

With these questions the leader has some idea of what to cover in the next session. Maybe group members would be willing to look for their own answers and report at the next session. If members raise important issues on a topic other than food, you might consider an outside resource person for one of your meetings. Contact a local physician, nurse, a social worker or your Extension youth home economist. Maybe you can think of other resource persons who would be valuable.

HINTS: Before the group begins, it might help to take some time for individuals to make their own lists of things they would like to know about a topic.

You may discover that there is little or nothing the members want to know about a specific topic. If this is the case, go on to another topic of interest.

Either-Or Forced Choice

THE ACTIVITY: Encourages members to decide between two competing alternatives.

Helps members examine their feelings, their values and self-concept.

METHOD: This is a "moving around" activity, so have the group stand up. Then, as you read each set of the following choices, direct individuals to go to one side of the room if they identify with the first word and to the other side if they identify more with the second word. No one can remain in the middle. Each must decide. Then each person should find a partner on his or her side of the room and discuss reasons for the choice. Discussions should be limited to two minutes. Before the second choice is made, members should go to the middle of the room.

Here are some sets of choices to use: "With which do you identify more?"
DO YOU FEEL MORE LIKE . . .

- a hamburger person or a pizza person?
- a saver or a spender on food?
- an indoor meal or an outdoor picnic?
- a tortoise or a hare when it comes to cooking?
- a loner or a grouper?
- a breakfast person or a dinner person?
- a talker or a listener at the meal table?
- the present or the future?
- an arguer or an agree-er?
- a cook or an eater?
- the dishwasher or dryer?
- a mess-up or a clean-up person?
- a vegetable and salad or a meat and potatoes fan?

Choose from the above list or make up your own. Use only five or six at a time.

If group becomes quite talkative and seems to be discontented just sitting, you may lose their attention. This activity might help to release some excess energy!

Leader should join in, too!

Twenty Things I Love To Eat

THE ACTIVITY: Helps members to identify foods they really like and then to examine characteristics of those foods. (This could provide a good starter for a session on appearance or on fad foods.)

METHOD: The leader distributes paper and asks members to write the numbers 1 through 20 on the middle of the sheet. The member should make a list of 20 foods he or she loves to eat.

The leader should also make his or her own list of 20. As the leader finishes, it might be mentioned that it is alright if members have more than 20 foods, or fewer than 20 on their lists.

When the lists are done, the leader tells members to use the left-hand side of their papers to code their list. Each member needs to draw six vertical lines down his or her paper thus making five columns.

Example #1: If the topic is fad foods and diets, try this coding list:

1) In the first column make a peace sign before those foods you consider to be "fad foods."

2) In the second column write an "F" before foods you think many of your friends also love to eat.

3) Third column--an "R" for foods you've recently begun to enjoy (within two years).

4) In column four write "HC" for high-calorie foods.

5) In column five write "LC" for low-calorie foods.

Then the group could be divided into small groups of 2 or 3 to talk about "what is a fad food?"

Example #2: If you are concentrating on appearance try this list:

1) In the first column write a "G" before all foods which are greasy or oily.

2) In column two write "C" for all crispy or water-type foods.

3) Column three--an "F" for foods you eat frequently (two or three times a week).

4) Column four--an "E" for those you consider to be energy foods.

5) In the last column place an "A" before foods that you think help you look better.

Members might share all those foods they marked "A" and explain <u>why</u> they think a particular food can help them look better.

ADDITIONAL LIST:

(Choose only 5 for any one session).

1) A "$" sign for any food which <u>you</u> consider to be expensive.

2) A "T" before those foods which take time to prepare.

3) An "X" for foods you've loved as long as you can remember.

4) A "W" for those foods you eat every week.

5) A "FV" for those foods which are fruits or vegetables.

6) An "ME" for those foods which are all or mostly from the meat group.

7) A "B" for those from the bread-cereal group.

8) An "MI" for foods from the milk group.

Add to this list with your own ideas.

HINTS:

This strategy can be repeated several times throughout the year. It is a good idea to save lists and compare them over a period of time.

"I Learned Statements" are an excellent follow-up to this strategy.

I Learned Statements

THE ACTIVITY: Gives feedback to the group and leader about the last activity in which they participated.

Helps members clarify and reinforce what they have learned.

Reinforces new things many members might not have realized they were learning.

Neatly summarizes almost any activity.

METHOD: The leader posts a chart with the following statements:

I learned that I . . .	I discovered that I . . .
I re-learned that I . . .	I was surprised that I . . .
I realized that I . . .	I was pleased that I . . .
I noticed that I . . .	I was displeased that I . . .

Right after a nutrition activity or a discussion on a specific topic, the leader asks the member to think about what they have just learned or re-learned about themselves and food. Then they can volunteer to share with the group one or more of their feelings using any of the above stem sentences. Members should not be called upon, but left to volunteer whenever they feel comfortable.

HINTS: Sometimes it helps to have members think a few minutes and write down some "I Learned Statements" before sharing them out loud.

Members should make their statements, but not attempt to explain or defend them. The leader should not allow discussion to interrupt the free flow of "I Learned Statements."

Reassure members that there are <u>not</u> any wrong or right answers.

Unfinished Statements

THE ACTIVITY: Helps members explore attitudes, beliefs, likes, dislikes, goals and purposes--individual values.

METHOD: Have members finish open-ended sentences on paper. The responses can then be shared in small groups of two or three.

Suggestions:
- When I enter a new group I feel . . .
- Teenage pregnancy and nutrition . . .
- Fad foods are . . .
- To me appearance is . . .

These are easy unfinished sentences to make up yourself. If you plan to talk about a specific subject, this may be a good way to start your group thinking about that subject.

For example: WEIGHT CONTROL

1) If I were to change my weight . . .
2) One way to lose weight is . . .
3) Weight control is . . .
4) Diet pills . . .
5) Fast weight loss . . .
6) Fast dancing or playing basketball . . .
7) Diets of people my age . . .
8) In ten years I want to look . . .

When members have completed their sentences, have them get into small groups to discuss their responses. (Have individuals within each group given similar responses to any sentences? What kinds of additional issues or concerns have been raised in the endings of these sentences?)

Then have the small groups share what they have learned with the whole group.

HINTS: When you make up your own sentences, be sure you have considered the individuals in your group. (Do you have a sensitive overweight boy or girl? What are the ages of group members?)

The sentences should relate to the subject you are discussing.

Self Contracts

THE ACTIVITY: Helps individuals establish what they really want and what they are doing to achieve it.

Encourages individuals to set personal goals and tc evaluate their own progress toward these goals.

METHOD: The leader explains "In this activity you will make a contract with yourself about some change you would like to make in your life by participating in this particular nutrition program. It can involve starting something new, stopping something old, or changing some present aspect of your life."

For example: A member may decide that he or she is eating too many fatty foods. This could be the cause of a complexion problem. The member might decide to work on this diet problem. The contract should include a statement explaining what the problem or concern is another statement stating how the individual plans to work on the problem. Perhaps the time needed to fulfill the contract could also be a part of it.

The members write out their contracts and if they really intend to carry them out, then they sign their name at the bottom. If the group wishes, contracts may be read out loud.

Sometime later, the group would find it very beneficial to take time to share and discuss how well each person is doing. An individual might wish to alter or change a part of his or her contract. This is, and should be, a part of self-evaluation.

HINTS: Leader should also participate.

Encourage members to be specific and realistic in setting their goals.

This activity will work out best after a few meetings have passed. Individuals will know you and the other members better, and they will have a more realistic idea of what they might be able to accomplish.

Letters To The Editor

THE ACTIVITY: Provides a chance for teenagers to express their views on the issue of nutrition.

Helps the individual establish values on the issue.

METHOD: Each person writes a "letter to the editor" on some issue of nutrition. Depending upon the age and writing ability of individuals the letter might actually be sent to a local newspaper or published in an Extension newsletter. The member should keep a copy of the letter. About a month later have the individuals read their letters out loud. (Why did you write what you did? What would you add to or change in the letter if you were to write another?)

HINTS: Perhaps the six topics identified by the Task Force on EFNFP would be a good place to begin for some ideas.

Brainstorming might be another way to help your group begin to find an issue they would like to write about.

The Nutrition Workers

THE ACTIVITY: Presents a problem that challenges the member with attractive alternatives from which to choose.

Helps the member get in touch with his or her feelings about what is important to him or her.

METHOD: The leader provides members with the list of nine nutrition workers.

STEP 1--Each member works alone and chooses the three workers he values most--that is, the three whose gifts the member would most like to receive.

STEP 2--Then each member is asked to pick three more names. (This leaves three workers in the least desirable group.)

STEP 3--Now members form groups of two or three to discuss their choices and determine if they can discover any patterns. (What seems to link your three most desirable people and what joins your three least desirable? What kind of values are you upholding in your choices?)

STEP 4--At this point, the group could do one of two activities.

a) Leader can have the group role play the nutrition workers, with each person arguing for why he is more powerful, more needed, more useful for mankind than the others.

b) Or the members can simply share their feelings about a particular worker.

STEP 5--Then the leader asks members: "What are you doing now to achieve what your top three nutrition workers could do for you?" Have members write their answers for this question.

STEP 6--Members might find it helpful to discuss their answer in groups of two or three.

STEP 7--Then the leader should summarize activity by explaining that in a sense each of us is a nutrition worker. What nutritional goals do we want to strive for? Where do we begin? How can we help each other? If we can begin to answer these questions, we can begin to be our own nutrition worker.

HINT: Have members keep to their answer to: What are you doing now to achieve what your top three nutrition workers could do for you? Members can add to that answer at a later date.

A GROUP OF NINE WELL KNOWN NUTRITION WORKERS HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE THESE SERVICES TO THE MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHICH OF THESE PEOPLE CAN BEST PROVIDE YOU WITH WHAT YOU WANT.

FOOD EXPERTS:

Dr. L. Goode--Facial expert who can make you look exactly as you want to look. With a good diet and some plastic surgery, if needed, Dr. Goode guarantees perfection.

Prof. Cal Orie--Can absolutely guarantee a weight loss or gain for you--whichever you want. With his help, you'll be able to maintain the perfect weight for your age, activity and your body build.

Dr. N. Ergy--If you're interested in zest and vigor, Dr. N. Ergy is your man! The "N. Ergy Plan" for energy can't be beat.

Dr. J. Cool--One of the top experts on diet and exercise for the athletic person. Dr. Cool guarantees continued success in your athletic interests.

Dr. Yin Yang--An expert to provide you with perfect health and protection from physical injury throughout your life. He does it through diet.

Jeremiah Longjohn--Who will guarantee you a long life through his fantastic brand-new diet program, Mr. Longjohn's method works!

Prof. Mindful--With his expert advice you will eat foods that will provide you with mental and emotional health. Again, his secret lies in correct eating habits.

Dr. Complex--For the fairest, softest, most clear complexion, Dr. Complex is your expert. His suggested diet is terribly unique and effective.

Dr. I--Dr. I has been a world reknown expert on "sight." Excellent eyesight throughout your life is her guarantee.

Teaching Teens Involves Listening...

"From time to time each of us has an urge or perhaps we feel a necessity for influencing others. Whether you are a volunteer leader, a parent, or someone who lives and works with adolescents, you may from time to time have asked yourself the question: 'How can I have the greatest impact on the young people whom I wish to influence?'

Perhaps you have experimented with several approaches. Have you ever tried listening? The times when I have had the courage to try listening I am continually impressed by the profound effect it has had on my relationship with the person to whom I am listening. As I begin to listen, really listen, not just for the words but for the meaning and feeling behind the words as well, I find that our two private worlds begin to melt into one world of concern and understanding. As a result of understanding the young person, I begin to appreciate him more as an individual possessing unique qualities--a person of very special worth. He becomes a very different person from the one I began listening to."

AM I REALLY LISTENING TO THEM??

(Adapted from: "What? Influence People by Listening" by Joe T. Waterson, Youth Development Specialist.)

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